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Via ECFS  
Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: In the Matter of Petition of USTelecom for Forbearance Pursuant to  
47 U.S.C. Section 160(c); WC Docket No. 18-141; Category 1**

Dear FCC,

I have been an Internet user since at least 1994, when I was still in high school and my father was an early adopter of newly available Internet service. Sonic.net was one of the first ISPs available to use, providing us dialup service with local numbers when others would not. Although much has changed in the technology landscape since then, the importance of smaller providers, competition, and the improvements to access and speed that it brings are greater than ever. In an increasingly Internet-dependent world, where access to information, job skills, and even the ability to hold a good job often depend on reliable, fast Internet access, we as a nation must do everything possible to ensure the healthy long-term viability of our Internet access ecosystem. Independent ISPs like Sonic.net are an important part of the future of our communications infrastructure because they encourage growth and investment by all players, provide options in the marketplace to serve a variety of needs and price points, and act as an important safety net should any of the larger monolithic (arguably monopolist) players suffer economic or other issues which could threaten access for huge numbers of people.

Of particular note, Sonic.net is one of the few ISPs that provides a real alternative with significantly greater priority on customer privacy and data ownership. Over the past several years with scandals such as Cambridge Analytica and increasing legal action against Google and others major technology companies in the European Union and elsewhere, the importance of our privacy and data ownership has becoming increasingly clear. Sonic.net stands up for the rights of its users like few other ISPs in the US or even the world, which is why it lands near or at the top of privacy rankings for ISPs every year.

I was a Sonic.net customer when I moved to my first house on my own at 19. They provided the first high-speed Internet access available to me in the form of DSL, when companies like Comcast/Xfinity were yet to provide any relevant - let alone high speed and reliable - options. As a result of simple technological limitations and the monopoly hold that cable companies often have on municipalities, Sonic.net's services slowly lost their competitive edge in speed vs. Comcast and so I switched to cable Internet service for some years. But I found numerous issues including terrible customer support (except when using their more expensive Business plans), unreliable speeds, unexplained outages, and ongoing fees that were not clearly explained up-front, not to mention rate

increases I was not notified of in advance, and other issues.

I was very glad when I was able to return to Sonic.net again when I moved into San Francisco. But yet again I had to switch some years later to Comcast/Xfinity due to technological limitations that meant Sonic.net gave lower speeds than I needed. Sonic.net was reliant on aging AT&T infrastructure which AT&T had little incentive to update due to lack of competition, and as mentioned Comcast's infrastructure was not open to other players to provide competitive service. Additionally, an overall lack of competition meant that Comcast was really my only other viable option, so I reluctantly became a Comcast subscriber yet again. And yet again I experienced the same issues I mentioned above, outages, slowdowns, bad equipment, forced shared semi-public wifi sapping my bandwidth, and terrible customer support.

I moved several more times over the next 2 years and in each location I was far enough from Sonic's local infrastructure that the speeds simply weren't comparable, even though the price, service, and support were far superior, as I know. It was a difficult decision. Finally. I was thrilled to be able to return to Sonic.net this year when their Gigabit service came to my neighborhood. They have been making significant investments in new infrastructure as few other ISPs have, and no other ISPs in my neighborhood have done in recent memory. Not only that but their offering is the fastest connection available in the nation, bi-directional, uncapped, and with unparalleled privacy protection.

It is vital the options that Sonic.net and other independent ISPs offer be preserved for the benefit of all users. My experience of monopolized markets and providers is an important lesson in the degradation of service, support, and pricing that occurs when alternatives do not exist. Support Sonic.net and other local providers, now, and into the future!

Oshyan Greene